Testimony of

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Before the

Education Committee

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Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students.

I support the minimum teacher salary as it shows respect for teachers and the valuable role our profession plays in our community and our state. I support the COVID benefit enhancement as teachers do deserve a concrete 'thank you' for the dedicated work they did throughout the entire pandemic. Also, the way it is presented will help to ensure teacher retention. It's a win for all.   I support the teacher tax credit because teachers with an initial certificate deserve some financial relief.   I support ending edTPA and committing ourselves to supporting aspiring educators in a better way.   I support raising the kindergarten start age so students can be developmentally ready when they enter school. Students deserve the gift of time to grow, to be healthy, and to be happy.   I support play-based learning as it's what children truly need! Let our youngest students learn as they are supposed to--through play! I support a duty free prep time. Teachers have a massive workload that requires so much preparation. A guaranteed 30 minutes is truly only a start. And finally, I support the educator bill or rights. Let teachers do their jobs as it's intended to be.   This groundbreaking legislation has the capacity to guide education in a positive direction for many years in our great state. It not only benefits teachers, but students and families alike all across Connecticut. I implore you to please move this legislation forward and into state law.   Thank you for your time and consideration.

Fondly,

Marika Heughins